Fall in France breaks teen’s back, but not his or family’s faith

By Natalie Hoefer

On July 6, 18-year-old Alex Kalscheur had only five days left of a two-week visit to France, staying with longtime family friends. “He had just gotten his Eagle Scout Award [the highest level of Scouts BSA, formerly Boy Scouts of America], and was one of the youngest managers at McDonald’s ever,” says his mother, Amy Kalscheur. The trip to France was “a big celebration of several things. It was a big deal for him to visit them.” Earlier that day, Alex, a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, participated in First Friday Mass at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. While there, he purchased two rosaries and touched them to a relic believed to be Christ’s crown of thorns, retrieved from Jerusalem by St. Helen in the fourth century.

That evening he and his hosts were enjoying a large gathering at a chateau in the Alps. Alex still had the two rosaries in his pocket when tragedy struck.

“It was 30 feet down”

“Alex said, ‘Mom, it was so beautiful. The stars came out, and I wanted to see them better,’ ” says Kalscheur, repeating her son’s recounting of the incident. “So he stepped up on a 2-foot wall and looked up. “He doesn’t remember how it happened, but he fell, and on the other side of the wall it was 30 feet down.”

The fall fractured one of Alex’s vertebrae and “imploded” another, Kalscheur says, sharing the explanation from the doctors in France.

She is in France now, staying as long as possible each day by Alex’s side in the hospital where he is recuperating from back surgery. Kalscheur took time from her son’s bedside to speak with The Criterion from the hospital.

“His hips seem to work, but he’s losing movement a little,” she reports. “His knees are still too stiff to stand up yet.”

See FRANCE, page 13

Rich heritage: Black sisters, priests mark 50 years of shaping Catholic Church in the United States

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Fifty years ago, Josephite Father William Norvel thought it was time for black priests to come together.

The year, 1968, was a tumultuous one in American history. The country was struggling to implement civil rights for blacks, protests of the Vietnam War became common and some were violent, and young people rejected the authority of their parents’ generation.

The black priests wanted to support each other. They also wanted to discuss how to respond to the times and gain the Church’s backing to better evangelize black communities.

More importantly, they wanted to confront the racism they were experiencing within the Church. The priests wanted to feel accepted for who they were: African-American clergy who could share a rich cultural heritage, but were feeling suppressed by white-dominated Church leadership.

Father William and dozens of black priests met in Detroit in April in the first meeting of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus. The meeting came soon after the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Questions abounded in the minds of the priests.

“I felt at that time we needed to bring to the attention of the Church the racism experienced in our seminaries and in our Church,” said Father William, now 82, and retired in Atlanta, recalling that first gathering.

See CAUCUS, page 10

Young couple finds their love and faith in God form a life-changing combination

Fifth part in a continuing series

By John Shaughnessy

It’s a story of two people finding love—complete with the fun way they met, a memorable proposal and the beautiful commitment they have made.

On another level, the story of Matt and Kayci Mikrut also offers a look into the deep longings that young adults have, and the ways that the Church and the Catholic faith can help fulfill those desires.

So where to start—with the love that binds two people, or the faith that leads to a sense of community, a feeling of belonging and a relationship with God?

For Matt and Kayci, there’s no need to make a choice. Their hope, their belief—as a young married couple of nine months—is that love and faith can thrive side by side, helping both to deepen.

The first chapters of their story once again reveal how love supported by faith and faith supported by love form a powerful, life-changing combination.

Making the connection—love

Matt and Kayci first became aware of each other before a game of flag football in November of 2013. Both were in the early parts of their careers at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) headquarters in Indianapolis when Kayci was asked to be a substitute on Matt’s team in the NCAA’s intramural league.

“I was warming up and stretching, and she caught my eye,” recalls Matt, who also caught two touchdown passes from Kayci when she played quarterback during the game.

Their connection grew through their shared passion in sports, with their first date being during the NCAA’s Big Ten Championship game in December of 2013.

So where to start—with the love that binds two people, or the faith that leads to a sense of community, a feeling of belonging and a relationship with God?

For Matt and Kayci, there’s no need to make a choice. Their hope, their belief—as a young married couple of nine months—is that love and faith can thrive side by side, helping both to deepen.

Their connection grew through their shared passion in sports, with their first date being during the NCAA’s Big Ten Championship game in December of 2013.

Making the connection—love

Matt and Kayci first became aware of each other before a game of flag football in November of 2013. Both were in the early parts of their careers at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) headquarters in Indianapolis when Kayci was asked to be a substitute on Matt’s team in the NCAA’s intramural league.

“I was warming up and stretching, and she caught my eye,” recalls Matt, who also caught two touchdown passes from Kayci when she played quarterback during the game.

Their connection grew through their shared passion in sports, with their first date being during the NCAA’s Big Ten Championship game in December of 2013.

Making the connection—love

Matt and Kayci first became aware of each other before a game of flag football in November of 2013. Both were in the early parts of their careers at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) headquarters in Indianapolis when Kayci was asked to be a substitute on Matt’s team in the NCAA’s intramural league.

“I was warming up and stretching, and she caught my eye,” recalls Matt, who also caught two touchdown passes from Kayci when she played quarterback during the game.

Their connection grew through their shared passion in sports, with their first date being during the NCAA’s Big Ten Championship game in December of 2013.

Making the connection—love

Matt and Kayci first became aware of each other before a game of flag football in November of 2013. Both were in the early parts of their careers at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) headquarters in Indianapolis when Kayci was asked to be a substitute on Matt’s team in the NCAA’s intramural league.

“I was warming up and stretching, and she caught my eye,” recalls Matt, who also caught two touchdown passes from Kayci when she played quarterback during the game.

Their connection grew through their shared passion in sports, with their first date being during the NCAA’s Big Ten Championship game in December of 2013.
Tennessee’s Catholic bishops urge governor to halt upcoming executions

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (CNS) — Bishops J. Mark Spalding of Nashville, Richard F. Stika of Knoxville and Martin D. Holley of Memphis have written to Gov. Bill Haslam urging him to “use your authority as governor to put an end to the fast-track executions planned” in the state of Tennessee in the upcoming months.

“It is within your power to establish your legacy as a governor of Tennessee who did not preside over an execution on your watch,” the state’s three Catholic bishops wrote.

The last person to be put to death by lethal injection in Tennessee was Cecil Johnson in 2009, when Phil Bredesen was governor. The state has carried out a total of 10 executions since 1976, five of those during Bredesen’s tenure.

In Tennessee, the governor has sole authority to grant clemency to death-row inmates.

There are currently 62 men and one woman on Tennessee’s death row.

The next man scheduled to be executed by the state is Ricky Ray Inck on Aug. 9. Inck, 59, who has a history of serious mental illness, was convicted in 1986 of the rape and murder of a 7-year-old Knox County girl named Paula Dyer, and has been on death row for more than three decades.

In their letter to Haslam, the bishops called for mercy, including for those who have committed terrible crimes. “We join with many other religious denominations in firmly opposition to the execution of those convicted of heinous crimes,” they wrote.

The bishops thanked Haslam for meeting with them in the past, and for his willingness to learn more about the Church’s opposition to capital punishment and the implications of that teaching.

In their letter, the bishops recalled the story of St. John Paul II’s visit to Louis in 1999, when he called for an end to the death penalty as both cruel and unnecessary. The pope said, “It is simply not necessary as the only means to protect society while still providing a just punishment for those who break civil laws,” the bishops wrote in their letter.

“Rather than serving as a path to justice, the death penalty contributes to the gross disrespect for human life,” the bishops’ letter to the governor comes at the same time that a trial begins over Tennessee’s new lethal injection protocol. More than 30 death-row inmates filed suit against the state, contending that the new three-drug combination — midazolam, vecuronium bromide and potassium chloride — used in the lethal-injection protocol amounts to cruel and unusual punishment.

Tennessee has not used this three-drug cocktail to carry out an execution before, but similar or identical drug combinations were used in botched executions in other states, according to the death-row inmates’ attorneys.

The lethal-injection drug trial began on July 9. With that underway and Inck’s execution date set for Aug. 9, the state’s capital punishment system is facing renewed scrutiny. The state’s Catholic bishops do not see the only ones voicing their opposition to it.

The national organization Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty earlier this month named Nashville resident Hannah Cox its new national manager, and is expanding its coalition of conservative lawmakers and constituents who are “questioning whether capital punishment is consistent with conservative principles and values due to the system’s inefficacy, inequity and inaccuracy.”

Cox, formerly with the Beacon Center of Tennessee, a free-market think tank, said in a statement: “Ending the death penalty aligns perfectly with my conservative beliefs because it eliminates the risk of executing innocent people, reduces costs to taxpayers, and is consistent with valuing life.”

The move comes after Tennessee’s death row in recent years after they were proven innocent. Paul House, who was exonerated by DNA evidence after spending 22 years on death row, has written an open petition to ask the state not to pursue Inck’s execution or any execution, noting the risk of executing an innocent person.

In June, the American Bar Association released a study titled “Potential Cost-Savings of a Severe Mental Illness Exception to the Death Penalty: An Analysis of Tennessee Data,” which noted that the state could save an estimated $1.4 million to $1.8 million per year by adopting a ban on capital punishment for defendants with severe mental illness.

The report stated that if defendants with severe mental illness were excluded from the death penalty, this “could result in considerable savings due to the costs of caring for individuals who could face expensive capital prosecutions, and decades of appeals would become ineligible” for capital punishment.

Lawmaker urges protecting religious liberty of adoption, foster agencies

WASHINGTON (CNS) — An amendment sponsored by a congressman from Alabama and approved by the House Appropriations Committee on July 11 aims to protect Catholic and other faith-based agencies that choose, based on their religious conviction, not to place children with same-sex couples or foster care agencies.

“As co-chairman of the House Coalition on Adoption, my goal was straightforward: to encourage states to include all experienced and licensed child welfare agencies so that children are placed in caring, loving homes where they can thrive,” Rep. Robert Aderholt, R-Alabama, said in a statement. “We need more support for these families and children in crisis, not less.”

Aderholt noted that in several states and localities across the country, governments are not allowing religious organizations to operate child welfare agencies.

The amendment to an upcoming funding bill would require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to withhold 15 percent of federal funds for child welfare services from states and localities that discriminate against these agencies.

Over the past several years, government actions in Boston, San Francisco, the District of Columbia and the state of Illinois have prompted local Catholic Charities agencies to stop providing adoption or foster care services because the agencies would not violate Church teaching and place children with same-sex or unmarried heterosexual couples.

The most recent example has occurred in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, where in March, the city of Philadelphia’s Department of Human Services froze all new foster care placements with the archdiocese’s Catholic Social Services (CSS). On average, the Catholic agency serves 127 foster children a day placed with more than 100 families in the city.

At issue is a long-standing practice of CSS not to perform evaluations of the homes of same-sex couples wishing to care for foster children, and instead to refer the required process to one of seven other foster agencies contracted by the city’s Department of Human Services.

Providing such care for more than a century, the agency adheres to Catholic teaching that opposes same-sex marriage and affirms marriage as a sacrament reserved only to one man and one woman.

The city’s decision also affects foster care services provided by Bethany Christian Services, a global nonprofit that operates in 36 states. The organization and CSS have contracted with the city on foster care since the late 1990s.

The assistance New initiative

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson offers opening remarks before saying a prayer at the Palliative Care Conference at Marian University in Indianapolis on June 26. The conference was the first event of a new initiative of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Franciscan Health and St. Vincent Health that will provide education and resources for those who accompany individuals and their families through chronic illness, suffering and the end stages of life.

(PhoNo by Natalie Hoffer)
WASHINGTON (CNS)—Brett Kavanaugh, the federal judge who is the newly announced Supreme Court nominee, has stepped into a firestorm. Some have praised his nomination, others have slammed it, hinges primarily on how they think he will vote on abortion cases.

This contention was on full display on July 9 hours before President Donald J. Trump formally announced theycz nome and fill the vacancy on the court left by Justice Anthony Kennedy’s retirement. A crowd assembled on the steps of the Supreme Court with signs, placards and bullhorns perch for and against the court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which established a woman’s constitutional right to end a pregnancy.

Eruptions ran high about the possibility of this decision being overturned since Trump promised before his win to appoint judges to the court who would follow a pro-life justices to do this during his presidential campaign.

Many, Kavanaugh’s nomination seems to sound a death knell to Roe, but no one sees it this way. Some in the pro-life community lobbied against saying he wouldn’t do enough to overturn the decision, and many legal experts are now advising caution before saying it is unlikely his vote alone would do something drastic to laws already in place. Kavanaugh’s writings on Roe vs. Wade would require an initial four-vote approval by the court. It is also unlikely the court would face a specific case with the potential to overturn Roe, said Francis Beckwith, a professor of philosophy and church-state studies at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, who has followed Kavanaugh closely.

“Beckwith noted, Kavanaugh would be a man for others” although she added: “maybe not for me. I have a priest in the audience who used to be his pastor, following the motto of his Jesuit high school to be “a man for others” and being a priest in the audience who used to be his pastor, following the motto of his Jesuit high school to be “a man for others.”

Kavanaugh became a priest in the audience who used to be his pastor, following the motto of his Jesuit high school to be “a man for others.”

Kavanaugh’s role in the upcoming hearings and in looking through the “long paper trail” of opinions, he said, would be “a man for others.” Kavanaugh would pass Senator must since he was already thoroughly questioned when he was nominated to his current role as federal judge.

At that time, 12 years ago, he was asked by Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-New York, if he considered Roe v. Wade an “appropriate” decision. In response, Kavanaugh said: “If confirmed to the D.C. Circuit, I would follow Roe v. Wade that would be binding precedent of the court.”

When pressed for his personal opinion, he didn’t directly answer, but instead said the Supreme Court had upheld Roe “regardless,” and that it would be “appropriate for me to give a personal view of that case.”

The difference, Beckwith pointed out, is that Kavanaugh can no longer essentially rely on the Supreme Court’s ruling since he has already asked what he would do on this court.

Standing by rulings already decided, or “stare decisis,” the Latin phrase the court likes to use, may likely be Kavanaugh’s continued approach.

In an interview with an Episcopal church at the University of Notre Dame for Ethics and Culture, saying it was unlikely this would happen. But if it did, he said, “the decision by itself would not lead to any restrictions on abortion, but would allow for more debate on the issue. In other words, he added: “The result was likely be different in different states, and different in the same state from one year to another, as with most issues in our democracy.”

Similarly, Kenneth Cranston, an attorney and Catholic theologian, said in an opinion piece for The Cincinnati Enquirer newspaper, that reversing the court’s Roe decision would return the debate about the legality and regulation of abortion to the states, where it was before Roe v. Wade was decided.

“But, as a practical matter, the abortion landscape would remain largely unchanged in many parts of the country, containing a large percentage of the population,” he explained. “States already disposed to granting abortion rights will codify that protection. States predisposed to regulating access to abortion through ‘heartbeat’ bills, or laws that deny health care management will continue to do so, except without the expense and burden of having to fight it out in federal courts, where it does not belong.”

If confirmed, Kavanaugh will keep Catholic majority in Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (CNS)—When Brett Kavanaugh took to the podium on July 9 at the White House after being introduced as President Donald J. Trump’s nominee to fill the vacancy on the court left by Justice Anthony Kennedy’s retirement, a crowd of Catholic votes, echoing the voices of their Catholic faiths, was livid over Brennan’s vote.”

As far as how Catholics will view Kavanaugh, said it is difficult to say, “especially among justices who value the wide range of Catholic views. He also said it would be “interesting to see if Judge Kavanaugh’s jurisprudence reflects all of the tenets of Catholic doctrine, or just some of them.”

John Vile, professor of political science and dean of the University Honors College at Middle Tennessee State University, said Kavanaugh’s nomination, like Gorsuch’s, had more to do with being perceived as “social conservative voices.”

People who said partisan Catholic opposition to abortion, but he noted that Brennan was a strong supporter of Roe v. Wade, the court’s decades-long abortion decision.

Brennan was considered a primary influence in the Supreme Court’s 7-2 Roe decision, although he was not the justice who wrote the majority opinion. A 1993 biography of him says the “Catholic Church hierarchy was livid over Brennan’s vote.”

“Religious identification does not always indicate judicial decisions, especially among justices who value ‘stare decisis,’” Vile said, using the Latin phrase the court uses that means standing by rulings already decided. 

**Biographical highlights of the current sitting justices of the U.S. Supreme Court**

Judge Brett Kavanaugh, picked by President Donald Trump on July 9 to fill the vacancy left by retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy, is (left) graduate of the Texas Catholic University, said Kavanaugh’s nomination, like Gorsuch’s, had more to do with being perceived as “social conservative voices.”

People who said partisan Catholic opposition to abortion, but he noted that Brennan was a strong supporter of Roe v. Wade, the court’s decades-long abortion decision.

Brennan was considered a primary influence in the Supreme Court’s 7-2 Roe decision, although he was not the justice who wrote the majority opinion. A 1993 biography of him says the “Catholic Church hierarchy was livid over Brennan’s vote.”

“Religious identification does not always indicate judicial decisions, especially among justices who value ‘stare decisis,’” Vile said, using the Latin phrase the court uses that means standing by rulings already decided.

**WASHINGTON (CNS)—Brett Kavanaugh, the federal judge who is the newly announced Supreme Court nominee, has stepped into a firestorm. Some have praised his nomination, others have slammed it, hinges primarily on how they think he will vote on abortion cases.**

This contention was on full display on July 9 hours before President Donald J. Trump formally announced theycz nome and fill the vacancy on the court left by Justice Anthony Kennedy’s retirement. A crowd assembled on the steps of the Supreme Court with signs, placards and bullhorns perch for and against the court’s 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which established a woman’s constitutional right to end a pregnancy.

Eruptions ran high about the possibility of this decision being overturned since Trump promised before his win to appoint judges to the court who would follow a pro-life justices to do this during his presidential campaign.

Many, Kavanaugh’s nomination seems to sound a death knell to Roe, but no one sees it this way. Some in the pro-life community lobbied against saying he wouldn’t do enough to overturn the decision, and many legal experts are now advising caution before saying it is unlikely his vote alone would do something drastic to laws already in place. Kavanaugh’s writings on Roe vs. Wade would require an initial four-vote approval by the court. It is also unlikely the court would face a specific case with the potential to overturn Roe, said Francis Beckwith, a professor of philosophy and church-state studies at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, who has followed Kavanaugh closely.

“Beckwith noted, Kavanaugh would be a man for others” although she added: “maybe not for me. I have a priest in the audience who used to be his pastor, following the motto of his Jesuit high school to be “a man for others” and being a priest in the audience who used to be his pastor, following the motto of his Jesuit high school to be “a man for others.”

Kavanaugh’s role in the upcoming hearings and in looking through the “long paper trail” of opinions, he said, would be “a man for others.” Kavanaugh would pass Senator must since he was already thoroughly questioned when he was nominated to his current role as federal judge.

At that time, 12 years ago, he was asked by Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-New York, if he considered Roe v. Wade an “appropriate” decision. In response, Kavanaugh said: “If confirmed to the D.C. Circuit, I would follow Roe v. Wade that would be binding precedent of the court.”

When pressed for his personal opinion, he didn’t directly answer, but instead said the Supreme Court had upheld Roe “regardless,” and that it would be “appropriate for me to give a personal view of that case.”

The difference, Beckwith pointed out, is that Kavanaugh can no longer essentially rely on the Supreme Court’s ruling since he has already asked what he would do on this court.

Standing by rulings already decided, or “stare decisis,” the Latin phrase the court likes to use, may likely be Kavanaugh’s continued approach.

In an interview with an Episcopal church at the University of Notre Dame for Ethics and Culture, saying it was unlikely this would happen. But if it did, he said, “the decision by itself would not lead to any restrictions on abortion, but would allow for more debate on the issue. In other words, he added: “The result was likely be different in different states, and different in the same state from one year to another, as with most issues in our democracy.”

Similarly, Kenneth Cranston, an attorney and Catholic theologian, said in an opinion piece for The Cincinnati Enquirer newspaper, that reversing the court’s Roe decision would return the debate about the legality and regulation of abortion to the states, where it was before Roe v. Wade was decided.

“But, as a practical matter, the abortion landscape would remain largely unchanged in many parts of the country, containing a large percentage of the population,” he explained. “States already disposed to granting abortion rights will codify that protection. States predisposed to regulating access to abortion through ‘heartbeat’ bills, or laws that deny health care management will continue to do so, except without the expense and burden of having to fight it out in federal courts, where it does not belong.”

If confirmed, Kavanaugh will keep Catholic majority in Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (CNS)—When Brett Kavanaugh took to the podium on July 9 at the White House after being introduced as President Donald J. Trump’s nominee to fill the vacancy on the court left by Justice Anthony Kennedy’s retirement, a crowd of Catholic votes, echoing the voices of their Catholic faiths, was livid over Brennan’s vote.”

As far as how Catholics will view Kavanaugh, said it is difficult to say, “especially among justices who value the wide range of Catholic views. He also said it would be “interesting to see if Judge Kavanaugh’s jurisprudence reflects all of the tenets of Catholic doctrine, or just some of them.”

John Vile, professor of political science and dean of the University Honors College at Middle Tennessee State University, said Kavanaugh’s nomination, like Gorsuch’s, had more to do with being perceived as “social conservative voices.”

People who said partisan Catholic opposition to abortion, but he noted that Brennan was a strong supporter of Roe v. Wade, the court’s decades-long abortion decision.

Brennan was considered a primary influence in the Supreme Court’s 7-2 Roe decision, although he was not the justice who wrote the majority opinion. A 1993 biography of him says the “Catholic Church hierarchy was livid over Brennan’s vote.”

“Religious identification does not always indicate judicial decisions, especially among justices who value ‘stare decisis,’” Vile said, using the Latin phrase the court uses that means standing by rulings already decided. 

**Biographical highlights of the current sitting justices of the U.S. Supreme Court**

Judge Brett Kavanaugh, picked by President Donald Trump on July 9 to fill the vacancy left by retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy, is (left) graduate of the Texas Catholic University, said Kavanaugh’s nomination, like Gorsuch’s, had more to do with being perceived as “social conservative voices.”

People who said partisan Catholic opposition to abortion, but he noted that Brennan was a strong supporter of Roe v. Wade, the court’s decades-long abortion decision.

Brennan was considered a primary influence in the Supreme Court’s 7-2 Roe decision, although he was not the justice who wrote the majority opinion. A 1993 biography of him says the “Catholic Church hierarchy was livid over Brennan’s vote.”

“Religious identification does not always indicate judicial decisions, especially among justices who value ‘stare decisis,’” Vile said, using the Latin phrase the court uses that means standing by rulings already decided.
Embrace your vocation as a missionary disciple

The summer months are a time to relax, slow down and recharge, but our vocation as missionary disciples is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week, 365-day-a-year endeavor.

And as he has done on countless occasions, Pope Francis reiterated that fact before reciting the Angelus on July 15 before an estimated 15,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican.

Commenting on the day’s Gospel reading ( Mk 6:7-13), the pope reflected on how Jesus sent the disciples out two-by-two to preach and to heal in his name.

“It was a kind of apprenticeship for what they would be called to do with the power of the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of the Lord,” Pope Francis explained.

Speaking only in the name of Jesus, he added, “the Apostles had nothing of their own to proclaim and none of their own abilities to demonstrate, but they spoke and acted as emissaries, as messengers of Jesus.”

Like the first disciples, the pope said all Christians are called to be missionaries and should be concerned more with sharing the Gospel than with earning money or even with being successful at winning converts.

“A baptized person who does not feel the need to proclaim the Gospel, to announce Christ, is not a good Christian,” the pope said.

Those words should challenge us not only in the lazy, hazy days of summer, but every day.

Our faith teaches us that evangelization must be at the heart of all we say and do—with our families, friends, co-workers, fellow parishioners and, yes, even those we don’t see eye to eye with. Pope Francis says as much.

“This Gospel episode concerns us, too, and not only priests, but all the baptized, who are called to witness to the Gospel of Christ in all the situations of life,” the pope said.

Each of us can no doubt think of a situation or two—locally, nationally or around the world—where messengers of Jesus are desperately needed to bring Christ to a situation where faith is not at the forefront or even included in a discussion.

Christians fulfill their mission, the Holy Father said, when their proclamation is motivated only by love for and obedience to Christ, and when the only message they share is Christ’s.

When Jesus tells his disciples in the Gospel “to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts” ( Mk 6:8), Pope Francis notes the poverty and simplicity of their lifestyle was meant to make those disciples—and us as well if we follow in their footsteps—to “free and light.”

Jesus, the pope added, calls his disciples to set out as “messengers of the kingdom of God, not powerful managers, not unmovable functionaries [and] not stars on tour.”

We must remember that, despite our efforts as messengers of Jesus, achieving our goals is not always guaranteed. Although all the baptized are sent out on mission by Christ, they go with no guarantee of success, the pope said. “This, too, is poverty: the experience of failure.”

Let us pray for the courage to embrace our vocation as missionary disciples, to be faithful messengers of Jesus, and to not be afraid to share the Gospel at all times.

And, like Pope Francis, we pray that Mary, “the first disciple and missionary of the word of God, would help us bear the message of the Gospel in the world with a humble and radiant exultation that goes beyond every refusal, misunderstanding or tribulation.”

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Faith can be a support to achieve equality for all under the law

Many Catholics and other people of faith were encouraged when President Donald J. Trump introduced Judge Brett Kavanaugh on July 9 as his nominee to succeed the retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Kavanaugh takes his Catholic faith seriously. In his remarks after the president announced him as his nominee, Kavanaugh said that for his life the motto of the Jesuit boys high school from which he graduated, “Men for others.”

Today, he does this by serving meals to the homeless in Washington in a Catholic Charities program. He proclaims the word of God as a lector during Mass in his parish. He also seeks to pass on the lessons of faith to others through mentoring, teaching and serving as a Catholic Youth Organization basketball coach for teams on which his two daughters are players.

More broadly, Kavanaugh has been a “man for others” in his years dedicated to public service as a legal professional. He is a good man seeking holiness. We, as Catholics in America, can be grateful for that.

We should want our judges to be good people seeking holiness. But we should also want them to be good judges seeking to be faithful to the law and the Constitution. And while people of various faiths or no faith at all can be good judges in this way, the Judeo-Christian tradition gives support to these principles.

God gave the Hebrew people his law through Moses on Mount Sinai. Unlike other peoples of that time who were ruled by the capricious will of self-interested strong men, the Hebrews were ruled by God’s law, which applied equally to everyone.

The most fundamental aspects of that law are timeless and relevant to people in all times and places. They are what subsequent philosophers and theologians have called the “natural law” and are, in part, enshrined in the Ten Commandments. They reflect the nature of humanity and of the universe as a whole created by God. In his mercy, he revealed them to us more clearly in the law he gave to Moses so that, in guiding our lives by them with the help of his grace, we might experience some of the happiness in this life and experience infinite happiness in the next.

The United States was diverse in the faith they professed. But in framing the Constitution, they were united in believing that the citizens of their new country should be ruled equally by law and not the tyrants from which many of those who settled the 13 colonies had sought to escape.

While not based in the specific teachings of the faith community or another, the laws of the United States in some important ways reflect the natural law that applies to everyone equally. When judges seek to be faithful to the Constitution and our country’s laws as they are written, they serve everyone well and do not favor one group over another. By his judicial track record, Kavanaugh would appear to be just such a judge.

Some laws may need to be changed so that all people may be treated more fairly in our society. The place for that to happen, though, is through the democratic process set out by our Constitution and not in our courts. Let legislators who represent those who elected them work out the text of our laws and judges simply be faithful to the laws as they were written.

All of us who are Christians can further equality for all by seeking to be fair to everyone we meet and in advocating for laws that are fair to everyone.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter for The Criterion.)

Letter to the Editor

St. Lawrence parishioners see face of God in others through twinning relationship

In the July 6 issue of The Criterion, there appeared a lengthy article on the “blessings of parish twinning.”

I wish to add to that article. St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg has had a twinning relationship with San Luis Parish in San Luis, Guatemala, for 18 years. Our sister parish, San Luis, has approximately 100 missions throughout the Peten, the northwestern part of Guatemala. This area was subject to much violence and death at the time of the military rule. Many Quechi Indians lost their lives, and many were uprooted. These humble people are very poor and very religious, as St. Lawrence parishioners have discovered through the years.

St. Lawrence has made four trips to San Luis over these years. The latest was three years ago when our former pastor, Father Peter Gallagher, visited with three parishioners. The priests of San Luis have also visited St. Lawrence four times.

The current San Luis pastor, Father Filomeno Ceja, visited a year and a half ago, and he was moved to speak at the Masses and to the school children about the people of San Luis and the appreciation and joy to have a relationship with the people of the Peten and also the good that has resulted.

St. Lawrence prays for San Luis on a regular basis, and the people of San Luis pray for St. Lawrence.

Over the years, St. Lawrence has helped to establish a health clinic, supported health programs, supported the education of children, helped in the construction of mission churches, and supported the cost of transportation and fuel for the priest’s visits to the many missions.

Many blessings have flowed to the people of St. Lawrence from this relationship. A greater vision of Church has happened, the faith of the Guatemalan people has been a model to St. Lawrence, the visits have deepened the faith of all, lives have been improved, and God has been seen in the faces of others.

Ron Stegman
Gullford

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include as many as possible. Letters should be informed, well expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful. The editors reserve the right to select and edit letters to fit space limitations, past editorial sensitivity and content.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202; 3237. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
Beatitudes show us how to become holy by what we do

Jesús explicó con toda sencillez qué es ser santo, y lo hizo cuando nos dejó las bienaventuranzas [cf. Mt 5:3-12; Lc 6:20-23]. Son como el carnet de identidad del cristiano. Así, si alguno de nosotros se plantea la pregunta: ‘¿Cómo se hace para llegar a ser un buen cristiano?’ la respuesta es sencilla: es necesario hacer, cada uno a su modo, lo que dice Jesús en el sermón de las bienaventuranzas” (Papa Francisco, “Gaudete et Exsultate,” #63).

The chapter of Pope Francis’s apostolic exhortation “Gaudete et Exsultate” (“Rejoice and Be Glad”) contains an extended and powerful reflection on the Beatitudes. The pope tells us that “the Beatitudes are in no way trite or undemanding, quite to the contrary. They clearly run counter to the way the world teaches us to live. ‘We can only practice them if the Holy Spirit fills us with his power and frees us from our weakness, our selfishness, our complacency and our pride’” (#65).

Space limitations make it impossible to address the pope’s insights into each of the Beatitudes. I strongly urge everyone to read prayerfully “Gaudete et Exsultate,” and to pay special attention to the Holy Father’s reflections on the Beatitudes in chapter three. Here he outlines for us a clear and compelling formula for holiness:

- Being poor of heart: that is holiness.
- Reacting with meekness and humility: that is holiness.
- Keeping a heart free of all that tarnishes love: that is holiness.
- Sowing peace all around: that is holiness.
- Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness.

Holiness means dedicating ourselves wholeheartedly to following the words and example of Jesus. This is the witness of the saints. They were not perfect in their efforts to practice the Beatitudes, but they sought and received the Lord’s forgiveness whenever they failed to live up to them, and they persevered, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the end, Pope Francis reminds us that there is only one criterion for holiness.

It is the Lord’s powerful words in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel: “I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me” (Mt 25:31–46).

These are uncompromising demands, the pope says. “Holiness, then, is not about swooning in mystic rapture. If we want to be holy and take our rightful place among the communion of saints, we must acknowledge and accept the words of Jesus ‘in a spirit of genuine openness,’ and ‘without any ifs or buts that could lessen their force’” (#97).

Holiness is not ideological, elitist or selective in its application in the Lord’s teaching. We cannot be poor of heart and act without mercy. Nor can we be for peace without hungering and thirsting for justice. We cannot be pro-life and refuse to welcome strangers. As Pope Francis says: “Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the youngsters who are battered, abandoned and infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection. We cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in a world where some of us can ‘spend with abandon and live only for the latest consumer goods, even as others look on from afar, living their entire lives in abject poverty’” (#101). These are harsh, unsettling words, but they flow directly from the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel quoted above.

All of us are called to be holy. We don’t have to be heroic, but we do have to take the demands of Jesus seriously in our daily lives. “Jesus’ words are few and straightforward, yet practical and valid for everyone,” Pope Francis says. “For Christianity is meant above all to be put into practice” (#109).

We do not have to be heroes, but we do have to be saviors of our own soul and of a soul in need. All of us are called to be holy. We do not have to be heroic, but we do have to take the demands of Jesus seriously in our daily lives. “Jesus’ words are few and straightforward, yet practical and valid for everyone,” Pope Francis says. “For Christianity is meant above all to be put into practice” (#109).
**Events Calendar**

**Fatima Retreat House to offer reflection on the Eucharist on Aug. 20 and 28**

“A Celebration of the Eucharist” is the theme of a reflection being presented by Father James Farrell at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis in August.

Retreatants can choose from a day or evening session.

- **Aug. 20**: 5-8:30 p.m.
- **Aug. 28**: 5:30-8 p.m.

In addition to the presentation, there will be private time for prayer, walking the trails and fellowship with others who want to deepen their relationship with Christ in the Eucharist. The cost to attend on Aug. 20 is $43, which includes a continental breakfast and lunch. On Aug. 28 the cost is $38, which includes a light dinner.

Register online at www.archindy.org/fatima.

For additional information, call Dustin Nelson at 317-545-7681 or e-mail dlbehn@garchindy.org.

**Divorce and Beyond on Tuesdays on Aug. 14-Sept. 18 in Indianapolis**

Divorce and Beyond, a ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, will offer a series of five sessions on the nature of Our Lord’s Vicarious love for Christ Parish, 7225 Southeast Ave., in Indianapolis, from 7-9 p.m. on six consecutive Tuesdays from Aug. 14-Sept. 18.

The support group explores the stress, anger, blame and guilt of divorce with the goal of leading participants toward ultimate forgiveness, happiness and growth.

Separated or divorced persons of all faiths are welcome. The cost of the six-week session is $30, which includes materials.

Sponsors are available. Register online at www.archindy.org/marriageandfamily, then click on “Divorce Ministry.”

For more information, contact divorce and bereavement ministry coordinator Deb VanVels at 317-236-1586, 380-382-9836, ext. 1586, or e-mail melaniev@archindy.org.

VIPS

Jerry and Betty (Kreider) Traub, members of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on July 20.

The couple was married at St. Lawrence Church in Lawrenceburg on July 20, 1968. They have four children: Susan Baker, Jennifer Prissy, Andy and Ben Traub.

The couple also has eight grandchildren.

**Otto Marjorie (Stenger) Wietlisbach**, a member of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Decatur County, was married in 1956. She will celebrate her 60th wedding anniversary on July 19.

The couple was married in St. Michael Church in Brookville on July 19, 1958.

They have seven children: Anita Kriege, Rose McCormick, Barb Wilds, Alan, Bill, David and Paul Wietlisbach.

They also have 13 grandchildren and seven—soon to be eight—great-grandchildren.

The couple will celebrate with an open house with family and friends.

**Parish twinning conference planned in Nashville, Tenn., on Aug. 24-26**

“Once Are We ... The Blessings of Parish twinning” is the theme of a twowEEK conference and 40th anniversary celebration hosted by the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas (PTPA) at the Diocese of Nashville Catholic Pastoral Center, 2800 McGeeveck Pike, and The Inn at Opryland Hotel, 2401 Music Valley Dr., in Nashville, Tenn., from 1 p.m. on Aug. 24 through 4 p.m. on Aug. 26.

Individuals from Catholic parishes across the country—including from central and southern Indiana—are invited and encouraged to participate.

Participants will have the opportunity to share information and learn best practices for building spiritually enriching twinning relationships with impoverished parishes in Haiti and Latin America.

Ten “Best Practices” workshops will cover key topics related to twinning relationships, including microfinance and economic development, agriculture, clean water, medical and dental missions, technology, education, and sustainable business opportunities.

The cost to attend is $239.27 per person.

The registration information, conference schedule and a list of keynote speakers can be found at www.parishprogram.org.

For additional information, contact PTPA at 615-209-3002.

For room reservations at The Inn at Opryland, call 615-809-0080 or 855-584-3466. The last day to book the special PTPA group rate is 9 p.m. on July 27.

**Baby Box founder to speak on July 29**

Baby Box founder Monica Kelsey will speak at a free lunch program on July 29 at St. Mary Parish Center, 212 Washington St., in North Vernon.

Members of surrounding communities and the public are invited to attend. Baby Box is designed to help women who want to give up their babies and have nowhere else to turn. The design of the baby box is simple. They are built into the side of the building and are programmed to sense when a baby has been placed inside. An EMS alert is initiated when the door is locked and the police are notified.

The couple will celebrate with an open house with family and friends.

**“Art of Discovery” is the title of an exhibit featuring the works of woodworking artist Keith Armstrong and photographer Nancy Smith, now on display in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

For library hours, call 812-357-6401, 800-987-7311, or visit www.archindy.org/events.

**For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.**
Support of faith, family helps Perry County parish thrive through 50 years

By Sean Gallagher

PERRY COUNTY—The Catholic families who live near Bristow in the rolling hills of Perry County in southern Indiana have been a tight-knit family of faith at St. Isidore the Farmer Parish for 50 years. The support of family and friends has been as needed during the first days of the parish. It was founded when two older nearby Perry County parishes—St. John the Baptist and St. Joseph—were closed and merged, something that can challenge a person’s faith.

Then, just weeks after the first Mass was celebrated in the parish, a fire and explosion happened on Jan. 10, 1969, that took the life of 23-year-old parishioner Martin Lasher and severely burned the parish’s pastor, Father Ralph Staashelm, who died four days later.

According to an article in The Criterion, the explosion and fire were caused when varnish fumes were ignited by heat from an electric range in the rectory’s kitchen. Lasher, engaged to be married at the time and recently discharged from service in the U.S. Army in Vietnam, was doing varnish fumes were ignited by heat from an electric range in the rectory’s kitchen. Lasher, engaged to be married at the time and recently discharged from service in the U.S. Army in Vietnam, was doing

“I’ve done that for years,” she said. “My mom is the chairperson of that stand. My family works it the whole day. There used to be a lady down the road that did it. Then she passed away, and my mom took over.

Like the faith that is passed on from one generation to the next. That was on the mind of parishioner Rick Kleaving, 40, as he walked into the parish church on June 24 for a Mass to celebrate the anniversary. He came to the packed church with his wife and three young children.

“It’s a great turnout for the day,” said Kleaving, who volunteers with maintenance and grounds keeping at the parish. “It means everything to the parish as far as what we’ve grown up with. Hopefully, one day our children will grow up with it as well.”

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was principal celebrant at the Mass. In his homily, he recalled how 1968 has been called “the year that shattered America.” The war in Vietnam continued to rage, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and presidential candidate Robert Kennedy were assassinated that year.

“They’re very generous in the amount of time that they donate, putting sweat equity into the place. To me, that makes it stand out.

And it’s been that way throughout the history of St. Isidore.

Membership over the years, 85, is a founding member of the parish. Previously a member of St. Joseph Parish, he worked to build up support for the founding of St. Isidore 50 years ago.

“I’m proud of the parish,” said Hubert, who was one of the four farmers that farmed four miles south of St. Isidore. “I’ve always done a lot of work for it. If I wasn’t doing anything for myself, the first thing that I would think about was to work up there.”

For many years, the couple led the organizing of St. Isidore’s shooting match, its major social and fundraising event held annually on the third Sunday of October. The event features a target shooting competition popular with the many hunters of the area.

Both are glad to see so many young parents and their children take up hunting with the parish like they did in its early days. “I’ve had some good young families up there, and they’re pulling together really good,” Hubert said. “It’s good for the future.”

“She’s sows seeds for the children to take part in the Church and in their families,” said Ann.

Sheila Borden, 47, has called St. Isidore her spiritual home her entire life. A member of the parish council, a lector and catechist there, she also leads the committee that has organized the celebration of the parish’s anniversary.

She experiences the family nature of St. Isidore, especially in the shooting match. Borden and the family in which she grew up oversaw the country store that sells baked and other homemade goods at the event.

“I’ve done that for years,” she said. “My mom is the chairperson of that stand. My family works it the whole day. There used to be a lady down the road that did it. Then she passed away, and my mom took over.

Like the faith that is passed on from one generation to the next. That was on the mind of parishioner Rick Kleaving, 40, as he walked into the parish church on June 24 for a Mass to celebrate the anniversary. He came to the packed church with his wife and three young children. "It’s a great turnout for the day,” said Kleaving, who volunteers with maintenance and grounds keeping at the parish. “It means everything to the parish as far as what we’ve grown up with. Hopefully, one day our children will grow up with it as well.”

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was principal celebrant at the Mass. In his homily, he recalled how 1968 has been called “the year that shattered America.” The war in Vietnam continued to rage, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and presidential candidate Robert Kennedy were assassinated that year.

“They’re very generous in the amount of time that they donate, putting sweat equity into the place. To me, that makes it stand out. "It was difficult, but not impossible. The Catholic families of the area stuck together in those challenging times to build a parish that is faith-filled and brimming with life.

“When you come to St. Isidore, you’ll see a lot of young families,” said Father Luke. “I’m in my early 50s, and I believe that there are no more than one or two people that are older than me on our parish council. The majority of them tend to have young families. They’re very generous in the amount of time that they donate, putting sweat equity into the place. To me, that makes it stand out.

“I’m in my early 50s, and I believe that there are no more than one or two people that are older than me on our parish council. The majority of them tend to have young families. They’re very generous in the amount of time that they donate, putting sweat equity into the place. To me, that makes it stand out.

---

By Benedictine Father Luke Waugh, administrator of St. Isidore the Farmer Parish in Perry County.
on a golf course. And Matt began to think she could be “the one” when she enjoyed watching him. The five weeks it took Aaron to complete the fictional underdog boxer Rocky Balboa from the streets of Philadelphia.

“Playing golf was a new game for me,” says Matt, now 31. “Everything we’re passionate about, we share.”

Kayci had the feeling of Matt being “the one” after he asked her to visit his family in Washington in the fall of 2014. “I was so excited,” she says. “I thought that was quick,” says Kayci, who is 28. “I remember very vividly seeing his mom and sister for the first time and thinking this could be my new family.”

That feeling was confirmed in April of 2015 when Matt told Kayci he loved her. “I was so excited,” she says. “The first time he told me the words I actually had goose bumps over my whole body.”

Making the connection—faith

Matt began to develop another deeper relationship in his life shortly after he moved to Indianapolis in June of 2013. Living downtown, he started looking at different Catholic churches in the area. When he walked into St. John the Evangelist Church for the first time, it was during a period in his life when his commitment to the faith of his childhood and youth wasn’t that strong.

Initially, he missed as many as Sunday Masses as he made at St. John, and he usually sat in the back of the church at the pews, a spot well-known for welcoming young adults. One Sunday, after the 8 a.m. Mass, he was approached by Father Rick Nagel, St. John’s pastor. “Father Rick cornered me,” Matt says with a smile. “He started the conversation with interest in me as a person rather than starting a conversation with me as a person of faith. That makes a big difference to people in their twenties.

Eventually, the conversation between Matt and Father Nagel did turn to Matt’s faith life. He told the priest that he had been given the core foundation of his Catholic faith from his parents, but it wasn’t as deep at that point. It was an experience that Father Nagel could relate to, as he also had a period of time away from his faith as a young adult.

“When he looked at me, I think he saw a piece of himself from 20 years earlier,” Matt says. “He told me the door was always open to me.”

Matt began to enter the doors of St. John more frequently. “From twice a month to three times a month, every week, you could say again,” Matt says. “It was 100 percent more. I was committed to door was always open to me.”

“Father Rick was like the open doors of St. John more frequently. I was committed to the Church more. I was committed to going to Mass every Sunday,” Matt says. “He told me the door was always open to me.”

Matt had been looking for the Church’s role in his life. He found it in the parish, where he was given the chance to join the RCIA program. “After being married at St. John’s and going through RCIA together as a team of three, having that strength in God and in my husband has completely changed my life forever,” Kayci says. “We both moved here from different cities.”

Kayci says, “We were looking to build a community. I have my gym, my flag football. The Church offers us a social outlet at Church as well. Our RCIA group has formed into a little family.”

Kayci needed that extra layer of “family” from their RCIA group and Matt focused on their future and their value. They also found out so much more about each other through marriage prep. They found out more about the Catholic faith, too. It’s about having that support system that wants you to have a successful marriage. The Catholic Church wants you to have a great life together and be the best person you can be who helps others. And the marriage preparation complemented the growth of faith they had experienced as a couple.

They had gone to church together for a full year leading up to our engagement and marriage,” Matt says. “We had been growing in our faith together.”

Making the connection—love and faith

The growth of their faith together played a major role in Matt and Kayci’s decision to marry. Matt considered where they wanted to be together.

At first, they talked about getting married in Kayci’s hometown in Illinois. Yet the more they thought about it, Indianapolis became the best choice for them, and so was having the wedding in the Catholic Church, at St. John’s.

“We said our vows in a stunning church, in the presence of God, in the city where we met and fell in love,” Kayci says. “Our relationship blossomed as we began attending church at St. John’s together, and there was never any question that St. John’s was the place for us to begin our life together.”

Both smile as they recall their wedding day on Oct. 21, 2017. “My favorite part of the day was seeing the joy on the faces of everyone who shared in our special day—from our parents to our siblings and friends. But above all, it was seeing the joy on my wife’s face,” Matt says.

In the months following the wedding, Kayci and Matt turned their focus to her becoming a Catholic through the RITA program. Matt served as Kayci’s sponsor.

Kayci was received into the full communion of the Church during the Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday earlier this year. The depth of what the Church could add to her life flowed through her that night.

“Our wedding day, we had the support of our family and friends,” she says. “On that night, we also had a lot of support from strangers.”

“I can’t imagine going on this journey with anyone else. The rest of the journey is unknown, which can be intimidating, but knowing that I get to do it with my wife and with the guidance of God is all that matters.” —Matt Mikrut

Matt and Kayci Mikrut are all smiles moments after he proposed to her on a golf course near her hometown in Illinois on Labor Day weekend of 2016. Kayci flashes the ring while Matt holds the sign that he used to ask her to marry him, (Photo by Matt Mikrut)

It comes as no surprise that as our love has grown, so has our relationship with God,” says Matt. “It’s also advantageous to have this level of faith and the support of the community meant so much to me.”

“A team of three”

Reflecting on all those moments of love and faith, Matt describes the nearly five years since their paths first crossed on a football field as “an incredible journey thus far.”

“It becomes as no surprise that as our love has grown, so has our relationship with God,” says Matt. “I can’t imagine going on this journey with anyone else. The rest of the journey is unknown, which can be intimidating, but knowing that I get to do it with my wife and with the guidance of God is all that matters.”

Kayci marvels at how much their world has changed since they were teammates on that flag football team.

“After being married at St. John’s and going through RCIA together as a team of three, having that strength in God and in my husband has completely changed my life forever.”
By John Shaughnessy

Father Rick Nagel smiles as he talks about weddings, including the dramatic change he's seen involving marriage ceremonies at one of the most beautiful churches in central and southern Indiana.

For years, non-parishioners filled up the schedule for weddings at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis, lured by the grandeur and beauty of the historic church and its close proximity to reception sites in the heart of the city.

"Now, the majority of our weddings are for our own parishioners," Nagel said. "We have had a number of engaged couples who are getting married in other churches in their home parishes.

"Father Nagel says his true joy about all these weddings is that the young couples are choosing to be married in the Church, which is far from a given in today's society.

"In the midst of a secular culture that doesn't raise up marriage and family life as a highest value, it inspires me to know that these couples not only are choosing to get married in the Church but to live Catholic," he says. "It also gives me a lot of hope in a day when we hear all the statistics of divorce or we hear of people who don't get married."

Father Nagel makes a point of always thanking the couples "for getting married sacramentally in the Church.

"To receive God's blessing in the Church is very beautiful. As we do the marriage prep with the couples, we've learned that the vast majority are choosing this for themselves, and not just because of mom and dad or grandmom. They're choosing it because they believe it's paramount for their future."

Father Nagel believes the parish's emphasis on welcoming young adults and college students has contributed to many of these couples meeting each other and not just because of mom or dad or grandmom.

"They're choosing it because they believe it's paramount for their future."

"In the midst of a secular culture that doesn't raise up marriage and family life as a highest value, it inspires me to know that these couples not only are choosing to get married in the Church but to live Catholic. It also gives me a lot of hope in a day when we hear all the statistics of divorce or we hear of people who don't get married."

Father Rick Nagel, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis

"I'm not typically a matchmaker," Father Nagel says, breaking into another smile. "But I do feel we're very blessed to offer a fertile ground for young adults to make friendships and get to know each other. I can't tell you the number of couples who met at a social here."

Forming a foundation of faith

Yet the main focus is on helping people develop a deeper relationship with God, he says. And that emphasis extends for engaged couples as the parish provides—and insists upon—a strong marriage preparation program for them.

"We require the 'One in Christ' retreat," he says. "It's over two weekends, and it's very thorough with the theology of marriage, the covenant and some 'Theology of the Body.' During the retreat, the couples are always breaking off with questions that are being presented. So they have some time to talk. And during the week in-between, there's some homework to do together."

The second weekend of the retreat, which occurs on Saturday only, includes a focus on an aspect of the Catholic faith that most engaged couples haven't considered: natural family planning.

"What we find is that it is on the radar for the vast majority of couples," Father Nagel says. "When they learn about it, they think it's great. Requiring the classes provides the knowledge, and then they can make the choice."

There are also meetings with parish staff about planning the liturgy for the wedding.

"We emphasize that the most important thing on that day will be the sacrament." Father Nagel says. "They also make choices for readings for the wedding. That's powerful too because they're reading a lot, and they're going through the word."

A relationship that can change the world

The couple also is given a testing tool that reveals the gifts each person will bring to the marriage, and opportunities for growth.

"Then there are meetings with either Father Nagel or Beacon David Bartolowits, who presides at most of the weddings at St. John that don't involve the Eucharist."

"In our meetings with them, we ask, 'How did you meet? What do you love about each other? What do you struggle with about the Church? What do you love most about the Church?'' Father Nagel says. "We also ask them about the last time they've been to confession and whether they are cohabitating."

If there's a situation where the couple is living outside the teachings of the Church, Father Nagel talks to them about making a commitment to change that reality—in the belief that as long as someone is moving in the direction that God wants them to follow, God will honor that effort.

It all fits within the overall commitment that a married couple makes to each other and to God, Father Nagel notes.

"We know from the grace of the sacrament that couples married sacramentally in the Church can change the world. It sets them on a firm foundation. When they start on that firm foundation, they're more likely to continue that for a lifetime."

"Of the missions of marriage is to help each other get help, and to use that as a filter for your life together and for your family. When you do it, changes everything."

(Extension's help to rebuild Texas diocese after Harvey like a 'rainbow')

PORT ARTHUR, Texas (CNS)—After Hurricane Harvey last year, “there was no rainbow,” Bishop Curtis J. Guillory said. "We have supported Texas for more than 100 years, in good times and in times of crisis, especially, we want you to know that you are not alone. The Church is bigger than any challenges you face.

Based in Chicago, Catholic Extension raises and distributes funds to support U.S. mission dioceses in many places in the world, including Haiti, which are rural, cover a large geographic area, and have limited personnel and pastoral resources.

Hurricane Harvey’s blow to Texas was swift, but recovering from it will take years. The magnitude of last year’s disaster was massive—destroying homes, businesses, roadways and churches. Most of its damage was caused by flooding.

In the Diocese of Beaumont, which is in southeast Texas, church buildings took in 8 feet of water. In some areas, including Port Arthur, 90 percent of the land was flooded.

Residents are struggling with the financial tolls of losing their belongings and their livelihoods. Parishes have reported ruined buildings as well as increased revenue from their weekly collections, because parishioners are in dire straits.


—Restoration of the director’s residence at Holy Family Retreat Center in Beaumont.

—Restoration of Christopher Education building at St. Mary Parish in Fannett.

—The ministry of religious women in the diocese’s western vicariate. They serve three parishes with large Hispanic populations, who were ravaged by the storm.

Flood insurance for the buildings that will be restored is either insufficient or nonexistent and renovation costs are extensive, said Catholic Extension.

It also described the sisters’ ministry as “critical,” because “they are bilingual and a bridge to the Hispanics, mainly immigrants, who live in poverty, but are very dedicated to the Church.

“They have been living in prolonged misery, since the hurricane struck, but the sisters serve them daily with pastoral care, home visits and religious education,” Catholic Extension said.

Some of the funds were raised at an event hosted by Catholic Extension last February in honor of retired Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston. A native son of Beaumont, he asked that the event’s proceeds benefit rebuilding efforts in the diocese where he grew up. †
The priests to the parishers resolved to "have the Church do something about" racism, he said.

Mercy Sister Martin de Porres Gray was the only woman religious to attend. She has since left religious life.

The organization’s history records that she was so inspired by the gathering that she organized a similar meeting of black religious sisters in August later that year in Pittsburgh. About 150 women attended, marking the founding of the National Black Sisters’ Conference.

The sisters, too, wanted to support each other and address racism within the institutional Church as well as in their own congregations, recalled Sister Josita Colbert, 80, a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Baltimore who attended the gathering. Today, she serves as the congregation's vocation director.

Sister Josita said she came away inspired from the first meeting and continues to attend the annual gathering, which includes the priests’ caucus, the National Catholic Seminarists Association and the National Association of Black Catholic Deacons.

"It was amazing and overwhelming at the beginning," she told Catholic News Service (CNS). "We had speakers who challenged us in terms of what was going on in the world [then] and here in the United States as black people and what we as black religious women were going to do about it."

The priests' and sisters' organizations have had a vibrant history and will celebrate their 1968 founding on July 28-Aug. 2 in New Orleans. The seminarians and deacons will be there, too.

Father Kenneth Taylor, who pastors two parishes in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and is president of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, told CNS this year's gathering will be a time of celebration for all four organizations.

The joint meeting also will be one to reflect on the role of African-American Catholic communities, "especially during a time when we seem to have lost the interest of the Church leaders because of the strong Hispanic immigration into the United States," said Father Taylor, pastor of Holy Angels and St. Rita parishes, both in Indianapolis.

The organizations do not want to create a rift with Hispanic Catholics, but rather want to make sure diocesan bishops do not shrink African-American outreach while expanding Hispanic ministries, he said.

"This gives us an opportunity to come together in mutual support and encouragement," Father Taylor explained. "It also gives us a chance to come together to talk about the needs of the black community and what we can do to help black Catholics become more engaged in the Church."

A deep concern for racism underlies the organizations today. Some clergy and women religious were outspoken about the racism they saw in the 1960s. Their strained stances in those early years often alienated diocesan or congregational leadership.

Although the stridency may have been dialed back a bit today, their views have not faded. Black priests and women religious continue to say they want the Church to confront racism so that all the faithful can achieve true equality.

Father David Benz, 75, who was ordained to the priesthood in 1975 in the Archdiocese of New York and now is retired, said at times he feels African-Americans in the Church almost appear “invisible.”

“I belong to the same Church. I know what the social teachings of the Church are, and we as a Church see this and ignore that,” he told CNS.

Father Taylor credited the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for creating its Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, which is finalizing a pastoral letter on racism across American society as well as the Church. A vote on the document is planned for the bishops’ general assembly in November.

Still, black religious, priests and sisters expressed concern that African-American evangelization is being overlooked again within the Church. They voiced concern that diocesan organizations and parish and school closings disproportionately affected African-American communities.

“IT leaves the impression that the Catholic Church is pulling out of the black community,” Father Taylor said. Just as worrisome is the rise in white supremacy, overt racist comments in the media and in politics, and emerging political movements with anti-black appointees and women religious said they believe the Church must become more vocal in offering the moral guidance necessary to change people’s hearts.

Sister Roberta Fulton, a member of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur and president of the National Black Sisters’ Conference, credited congregations of women religious for addressing racism within their structures. She and others called for stronger efforts to promote religious vocations among African Americans as key to addressing their concerns.

“People are not entering religious life like they used to, so we are looking at other ways for you people to understand the call,” Sister Roberta said. One option is to encourage young people to become associates of a congregation. “Those associates, some have become sisters. They learn some things about the sisters and what we do, where we minister.”

Precious Blood Father Clarence Williams, senior parish priest at St. John of the Assumption Parish in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, in the Cleveland Diocese, was among the organizers of the black seminarians’ organization soon after the priests’ caucus formed. He said that the early annual joint gatherings of the associations helped encourage participants to reconnect to their ministry.

“Meeting yearly with the religious women and priests and really reflecting on our reality in our communities, within our diocese, within an association, we found our wisdom in that community to stay [in ministry],” Father Williams said. “Those without the support didn’t make it. It became too discouraging. It became too hostile,” he said.

For women religious, the annual gathering was just as inspiring.

The black sisters conference was wonderful because it brought us all together,” recalled Sister Juanita Shelley, a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph in Cleveland.

“We sang, we danced, we prayed, we talked about how wonderful it was to see other black sisters.”

Members of both organizations also lamented the overall declining number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, especially among African-Americans. With fewer vocations, it also means fewer opportunities for African-Americans to assume leadership positions in the Church.

“Over the years, we have made recommendations to get priests named [bishops]. But it seems as if the Church is much more concerned about the Hispanic community than they are about the black community,” Father Benz said.

Having more African-Americans in leadership, especially as bishops, would help with evangelization, Father Benz added.

The New Orleans gathering also will honor participants a chance to reflect on such questions. Attendees also will honor past and present leaders, those whom Father Taylor called “exemplars.”

He said rather than honor one person with an award, 50 exemplars will be identified and will be identified at the gathering.

The honor will serve to show not just where the organizations have been, but Father Taylor said, hopefully will inspire members to carry on their legacy to achieve full acceptance in the Church and society.

White women religious continued to say they want the Church to
Men who got settlements after alleged abuse share their stories

NEW YORK (CNS)—A front-page New York Times article published on July 16 detailed the alleged abuse of two seminarians in the Diocese of Metuchen, N.J., by then-bishop Theodore E. McCarrick in the 1980s that resulted in settlements to each man.

For one of the seminarians, the alleged abuse continued after he had been ordained to the priesthood.

The 3,100-word article, written by Laurie Goodstein and Sharon Otterman, said the bishop “could have invited them to his bedroom, where there was just one bed.”

The abuse of these two men, according to the article, “has been investigated by the Archdiocese of New York, New York City and the Diocese of Metuchen.”

Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley, pastor of St. Paul’s Church in Boston, who is a native of Metuchen, N.J., “acknowledged that allegations that Cardinal McCarrick engaged in sexual behavior with adults decades ago had led to settlements,” the paper said.

“The abuse of a minor by a priest—as is alleged in the Washington Archdiocese—is an abomination and sickens and saddens us all,” he said.

The article said that allegations that Cardinal McCarrick engaged in sexual behavior with adults decades ago led to some settlements made in the Diocese of Metuchen.

“The abuse of anyone who is vulnerable is both shameful and horrific,” Bishop Cechetto said.

Father Spitzer also plans to continue his efforts to engage seminarians and young clergy.

“Most parishes are ‘programmed out,’” the priest said. “The modules help the parent regarding proof of the soul. In another, research in Near Death Experiences, or NDEs, helps illuminate the reality of life after death. And an explanation of the physical properties of light and heat transfer is used to explain how the image on the Shroud of Turin could not have been humanly possible at the time it was made.

Anne Steinemann, professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Melbourne, Australia, an early supporter of Credible Catholic, has seen the positive impact Credible Catholic has on students.

“Science can explain ‘what,’ ” Steinemann told CNS, “but it cannot answer the question, the why. Credible Catholic is effective, easy and exciting. It answers, head on, the typical objections to the Catholic faith.

The modules' format also helps facilitate learning,” Steinemann said.

“Children,” Steinemann said, “can view the presentations on their own time, on their own device, in their own way. In the age of information technology, trying to get students’ attention, this does.”

Michael O’Hara, executive director for Credible Catholic, works with teachers, clergy and staff of dioceses and parishes to understand how the unique material can work with existing ministries, departments or catechetical classes.

Based on Father Spitzer’s books and other work in apologetics, modules include contributions from astrophysicists, historians, theologians, physicists, and other experts. Each module aligns with specific sections of The Catechism of the Catholic Church, so it can easily be used to supplement sacrament preparation or for individual study.

Father Spitzer’s foray into a multimedia catechetical website sprung from his growing concern that religious affiliation is declining, due in large part, he believes, to the influence, particularly on youth, of “secular myths and cultural influences that misrepresent the facts.”

These myths include science’s claims that God does not exist, that we are just a bunch of chemically evolved atoms and molecules, “suffering proves God does not exist,” and Jesus was “a very special person.”

Older Catholics can find these arguments challenging, but particularly vulnerable, Father Spitzer said, are many young people whose faith is tremendously shaken or disrupted when confronted with stressful life situations and pressures.

“Catholic bishops. The Credible Catholic’s ‘7 Essential Modules,’ based on Father Spitzer’s books, give students and catechists tools to meet the challenges of skeptics. They cover core Christian beliefs and offer science-based evidence to support them.”

The more validated it is, the more they espouse it. ‘7 Essential Modules’ includes Magis Center staff support, are free.

Based on Father Spitzer’s books and other work in apologetics, modules include contributions from astrophysicists, historians, theologians, physicists, and other experts. Each module aligns with specific sections of The Catechism of the Catholic Church, so it can easily be used to supplement sacrament preparation or for individual study.

For example, I approach the Resurrection through evidence, but I don’t assume belief is the only path to it,” the priest said.

Steinemann said, “Science can explain ‘what,’ ” Steinemann told CNS. “But it cannot answer the question, the why. Credible Catholic is effective, easy and exciting. It answers, head on, the typical objections to the Catholic faith.

The modules’ format also helps facilitate learning,” Steinemann said.

“Children,” Steinemann said, “can view the presentations on their own time, on their own device, in their own way. In the age of information technology, trying to get students’ attention, this does.”

Michael O’Hara, executive director for Credible Catholic, works with teachers, clergy and staff of dioceses and parishes to understand how the unique material can work with existing ministries, departments or catechetical classes.

But this isn’t a program,” said O’Hara. “A school in Texas might use Module 2 in their preparation programs, or as independent study, and the modules for homework, a summer study or journalized on it.”

Parents benefit from the modules’ content, too.

“The problem for the parent,” said O’Hara, “is that there’s an agreement among a group in a world unlike anything that they grew up in. They don’t have a counter to the arguments. The modules help the parent cope, and help them feel confident to counter the arguments.”

Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J.

ANAHIEIM, Calif. (CNS)—Jesuit Father Robert J. Spitzer, a philosophy professor at the University of San Diego, is an apologist and a Catholic polemicist who aims to help people think through questions about the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the unique material can work with existing ministries, departments or catechetical classes.

But this isn’t a program,” said O’Hara. “A school in Texas might use Module 2 in their preparation programs, or as independent study, and the modules for homework, a summer study or journalized on it.”

Parents benefit from the modules’ content, too.

“The problem for the parent,” said O’Hara, “is that there’s an agreement among a group in a world unlike anything that they grew up in. They don’t have a counter to the arguments. The modules help the parent cope, and help them feel confident to counter the arguments.”

Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J.

The modules, downloadable files and all supporting resources, are evidence-based arguments for core Christian beliefs. The catechetical website is located at www.crediblecatholic.com.

“I recognize both the urgency and the importance of helping people understand the rich, living tradition of the church, that the church has a right to life, work and study in safe environments. I intend to discuss this tragedy with the leadership of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in order to articulate standards that will assure high degrees of respect by bishops, priests and deacons for all adults.” — Cardinal Joseph W Tobin
Don’t let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment, that was known as Camelot.

She meant it as an elegy for her husband’s administration, but the audience in 2016 is more likely to take a lot more than JFK. The story of King Arthur and his quest to build a more perfect kingdom upon the principles of chivalry and justice as an alternative to brute force might have seemed quaint and naive to the Kennedy era, but it is clearly striking a chord now.

The director, Alan Paul, makes it clear the audience is meant to find him the see the play with fresh eyes. “As we grapple with how our country has changed,” he said, “we are bringing down the idealistic kingdom, the allusions were obvious. Indeed, when the actor playing Mordred took his final bow, I heard boos from some audience members. It had nothing to do with his performance, but it had everything to do with his character. Instead of the actors breaking the fourth wall, there was silence. Of course, one person’s Arthur is another person’s Mondred, and vice versa. What one person’s political criticism of the Kennedy administration was supposed to state is that we are all United States citizens. We all have a say in the way things are done. Can we really be happy in a time when window displays of attractive young people disagree with and White House officials mock dying senators? When political parties hammer each other down, it looks like that’s what it gains them? When the most helpless—the unborn, immigrant children, the poor and the underclass—are less than worthless? Where is their Arthur to defend them?

Lerner and Loewe meant their play to be a tribute to the American dream. Yet the musical is in many ways a tragedy. Queen Guinevere betrays her husband for handsome Lancelot, a man whose purity gives way to adultery. The play ends at the dawn of a battle between the once close friends, and the ideal of Camelot is already fading.

A dark ending for a play ostensibly celebrating American optimism and courage. What does Camelot mean to us in the future? More importantly, how do we reclaim that dream?”

Gabriel Hemrick

The Human Side

Prudence dictates need to understand laws of bonding, civil law

When I see a mother rubbing her infant’s back, it reminds me of studies on parenting. From them, we learn stroking an infant’s back, it reminds me of studies on the end of the show: the connection explicit in an interview given by Lerner and Loewe, not the Stratford Upnor Tavern, but the band The Criterion. I was told that I not that on the day after his death warrant was set, on July 6, we observed the feast of St. Maria Goretti.

When I was a child, the nuns who taught me held Maria Goretti as an example, reaffirming that, at the age of 11 years, died to maintain her purity. If this young Italian girl could die to preserve her purity, it was strongly suggested, we girls could certainly develop a healthy respect for our own bodies. When it’s me, we could more easily believe in, much stronger, such ideals.

On her deathbed, she forgave Serenelli. She was given a holy Communion, where he was a vicious prisoner until the night Maria Goretti came to him in a dream. From that moment on, he became a changed man, a man who accepted the forgiveness that was offered him by Goretti. He was tried, but never convicted. Upon his early release from prison, he begged forgiveness from Goretti’s mother and St. John Paul II also explained Goretti’s canonization in 1950 and led a life of devotion and prayer. She is known for her efforts to abolish the death penalty in 2015. I worked on that cause, and I saw the large files of information given to each legislator. It was a well-debated, thoughtful discussion and the facts won out.

Unfortunately, with the financial assistance of our wealthy governor, a petition to repeal the abortion issue passed before votes. Nebraskans voted overwhelmingly to reinstate the death penalty.

If each thoughtful Nebraska voter could give personally read those files we presented the legislators, the vote would have been different. But education was a gargantuan effort.

So, Carey and 11 others face possible execution, depending on a few recounts of the ballots and, in the case of Carey, not contesting the execution.

To live in the on-again, off-again environment of our current age, maintaining the institution she is something to fight for—feels more and more urgent,” he wrote.

The audience was clearly aware of this context. When the bastard son of Arthur, Mordred, speaks his lines of cynicism and coarseness, urging Camelot’s knights to throw off their ideal of goodness, “We’re bringing down the idealistic kingdom, the allusions were obvious. Indeed, when the actor playing Mordred took his final bow, I heard boos from some audience members. It had nothing to do with his performance, but it had everything to do with his character. Instead of the actors breaking the fourth wall, there was silence. Of course, one person’s Arthur is another person’s Mondred, and vice versa. What one person’s political criticism of the Kennedy administration was supposed to state is that we are all United States citizens. We all have a say in the way things are done. Can we really be happy in a time when window displays of attractive young people disagree with and White House officials mock dying senators? When political parties hammer each other down, it looks like that’s what it gains them? When the most helpless—the unborn, immigrant children, the poor and the underclass—are less than worthless? Where is their Arthur to defend them?

Lerner and Loewe meant their play to be a tribute to the American dream. Yet the musical is in many ways a tragedy. Queen Guinevere betrays her husband for handsome Lancelot, a man whose purity gives way to adultery. The play ends at the dawn of a battle between the once close friends, and the ideal of Camelot is already fading.

A dark ending for a play ostensibly celebrating American optimism and courage. What does Camelot mean to us in the future? More importantly, how do we reclaim that dream?”

Gabriel Hemrick

The Human Side

Prudence dictates need to understand laws of bonding, civil law

When I see a mother rubbing her infant’s back, it reminds me of studies on parenting. From them, we learn stroking an infant’s back, it reminds me of studies on the end of the show: the connection explicit in an interview given by Lerner and Loewe, not the Stratford Upnor Tavern, but the band The Criterion. I was told that I not that on the day after his death warrant was set, on July 6, we observed the feast of St. Maria Goretti.

When I was a child, the nuns who taught me held Maria Goretti as an example, reaffirming that, at the age of 11 years, died to maintain her purity. If this young Italian girl could die to preserve her purity, it was strongly suggested, we girls could certainly develop a healthy respect for our own bodies. When it’s me, we could more easily believe in, much stronger, such ideals.

On her deathbed, she forgave Serenelli. She was given a holy Communion, where he was a vicious prisoner until the night Maria Goretti came to him in a dream. From that moment on, he became a changed man, a man who accepted the forgiveness that was offered him by Goretti. He was tried, but never convicted. Upon his early release from prison, he begged forgiveness from Goretti’s mother and St. John Paul II also explained Goretti’s canonization in 1950 and led a life of devotion and prayer. She is known for her efforts to abolish the death penalty in 2015. I worked on that cause, and I saw the large files of information given to each legislator. It was a well-debated, thoughtful discussion and the facts won out.

Unfortunately, with the financial assistance of our wealthy governor, a petition to repeal the abortion issue passed before votes. Nebraskans voted overwhelmingly to reinstate the death penalty.

If each thoughtful Nebraska voter could give personally read those files we presented the legislators, the vote would have been different. But education was a gargantuan effort.

So, Carey and 11 others face possible execution, depending on a few recounts of the ballots and, in the case of Carey, not contesting the execution.

To live in the on-again, off-again environment of our current age, maintaining the institution she is something to fight for—feels more and more urgent,” he wrote.
The Book of Jeremiah is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend. One of the four major prophets of ancient Israel, Jeremiah so firmly saw himself as God’s representative that he wrote as if God were writing through him. So, in Jeremiah’s works, God often speaks in the first person.

Such is the case in this reading. The reading reveals the disorder and turmoil that existed in Israel at the time. The split was not only political. It also was religious, because people who held to different interpretations of the Law of Moses opposed each other.

Assuming the role of prophets, persons on their own pressed for one viewpoint or another.

In the writing of Jeremiah, God warned the people against these varying approaches to religious life. God’s warning was severe. These persons, impostors in prophecy, led people astray. Caring for the people and their well-being, God predicted doom for those who would confuse others in matters of faith.

The people were not the only victims of these frauds. God promised to send—legitimate prophets. God promised to send—prophets who were not imposters.

For example, in the Old Testament, King David commissioned the prophet Nathan to go to King Uriah and tell him the truth about the women involved in relations with King David. The prophet Nathan is not the only one to do this.

Two lessons are clear: Objectivity and truth, given by God, exists. God’s truth is exact. It is neither fluid nor open to compromise and falsification. It simply is as it is. All else is fraud and unreal. The prophets stressed this fact in the Old Testament. Those persons who usurped the prophets’ places were guilty of great fault and brought upon themselves God’s rebuke, for they misled the people whom God loved and intended to be holy.

The same theme is evident in this weekend’s New Testament readings. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians assures us that the salvation achieved for us by Jesus does not depend upon anyone’s earthly advantage. It is offered to all. Importantly, all of us need it. Mercifully, God offers us knowledge of truth. He sends us Christ. In turn, here on Earth, Jesus appointed as our guides the Apostles, whose teachings the Church so carefully keeps and reverses. Just as the Old Testament bejelled individual interpretation of revelation and emphasized the prophets, so the New Testament discount any personal definition of truth by emphasizing the place of the Apostles.

Reflection

The Church in these readings directly and frankly introduces itself and sets forth its credentials. In so doing, it stresses a fact of belief firmly presented since the days of the Old Testament.

God’s truth is exact. It is neither fluid nor open to compromise and falsification. It simply is as it is. All else is fraud and unreal. The prophets stressed this fact in the Old Testament. Those persons who usurped the prophets’ places were guilty of great fault and brought upon themselves God’s rebuke, for they misled the people whom God loved and intended to be holy.

The same theme is evident in this weekend’s New Testament readings. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians assures us that the salvation achieved for us by Jesus does not depend upon anyone’s earthly advantage. It is offered to all. Importantly, all of us need it. Mercifully, God offers us knowledge of truth. He sends us Christ. In turn, here on Earth, Jesus appointed as our guides the Apostles, whose teachings the Church so carefully keeps and reverses. Just as the Old Testament bejelled individual interpretation of revelation and emphasized the prophets, so the New Testament discount any personal definition of truth by emphasizing the place of the Apostles. The Church in these readings directly and frankly introduces itself and sets forth its credentials. In so doing, it stresses a fact of belief firmly presented since the days of the Old Testament.

My Journey to God

Jesus Joins ICE

By Norbert Krapf

I read the news today oh boy! They said Jesus joined ICE. Immigration and Customs Enforcers.

This is what we need to make the Gospel speak loud and clear. Jesus said, with fire in his eyes and Ice in his heart! Tear the little ones apart from their mammas. Put them in cages and cubicles. Let them not know where they are going or where their mammas and maybe daddies have gone and whether they will ever be together again. Let them cry and whine.

Let them learn that only about one-sixth of our parish community is aware that only about one-sixth of our parish was in attendance. Is it a mortal sin for those who did not attend? If so, must they go to confession before receiving holy Communion? (New York)

My daughter, who was 50 years old, became seriously ill. She spent six weeks in an intensive care unit, then entered hospice to die. When her death was imminent, a nurse finally found a priest to administer last rites. (It was a Jewish hospice, and they never mentioned calling a priest.)

By that time, my daughter was in a coma. She hadn’t been to church or to confession in 30 years. When she was admitted to hospice, the hospital had signed her permission for any necessary medical procedures. For example, it would be all right to resuscitate her if she began to convulse and weep! Let them not know where they are going or where their mammas and maybe daddies have gone and whether they will ever be together again. Let them cry and whine.

Let them learn that only about one-sixth of our parish community is aware that only about one-sixth of our parish was in attendance. Is it a mortal sin for those who did not attend? If so, must they go to confession before receiving holy Communion? (New York)

The simplest answers are: “yes” and “yes,” but they require some explanation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “The faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) … Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin” (#2181).

Realize, though, that gravity of matter is only one of three requirements for mortal sin—the others being full knowledge that the act or omission is seriously sinful, and complete consent of the will.

From the frequency in which I receive this question, I would guess that a fair number of Catholics are unaware that Mass attendance on holy days is a grave requirement—an excuse that disappears now that you have read this column! The catechism mentions illness and the care of infants to justify missing Mass, but there are other legitimate reasons as well, such as unavoidable work obligations. Particularly when a holy day occurs on a weekday, that could well be the case—a reminder to parishes that weekend Masses are a big help.

So if a Catholic misses Mass on a holy day through his own fault—and knew that it was a serious obligation—yes, of course, he would be bound to go to confession before receiving the Eucharist. It bears mentioning that sharing in the Eucharist was considered a one-way street. Jesus asked the Apostles to keep his memory alive.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.)

Pray and trust in God’s mercy regarding the souls of the faithful departed

Q: My daughter, who was 50 years old, became seriously ill. She spent six weeks in an intensive care unit, then entered hospice to die. When her death was imminent, a nurse finally found a priest to administer last rites. (It was a Jewish hospice, and they never mentioned calling a priest.)

By that time, my daughter was in a coma. She hadn’t been to church or to confession in 30 years. When she was admitted to hospice, the hospital had signed her permission for any necessary medical procedures.

A: I would not presume to know for certain the ultimate fate of your daughter, but I am inclined to trust in the mercy of a loving God. In the 25th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus indicates the final standard on which each of us will be judged—and the key question is: “Did you help people when they needed it?” (“I was hungry and you gave me food … ill and you cared for me.” Mt 25:35-36). From what you said, it would seem that your daughter scores high on this scale of compassion.

If, in fact, she did have an abortion, it could be that she regretted it later and repented. She may have then been absolved of it in the sacrament of penance without your knowing about it. Your reference to “last rites” reminds me to mention that this sacrament is actually called the “anointing of the sick”—highlighting the fact that it is not reserved for the moment of death, but should be received when anyone is seriously ill. That way, the person is more likely to be able to confess his or her sins, receive absolution and be assured of the mercy of the Lord.

The simplest answers are: “yes” and “yes,” but they require some explanation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “The faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) … Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin” (#2181).

Realize, though, that gravity of matter is only one of three requirements for mortal sin—the others being full knowledge that the act or omission is seriously sinful, and complete consent of the will.

From the frequency in which I receive this question, I would guess that a fair number of Catholics are unaware that Mass attendance on holy days is a grave requirement—an excuse that disappears now that you have read this column! The catechism mentions illness and the care of infants to justify missing Mass, but there are other legitimate reasons as well, such as unavoidable work obligations. Particularly when a holy day occurs on a weekday, that could well be the case—a reminder to parishes that weekend Masses are a big help.

So if a Catholic misses Mass on a holy day through his own fault—and knew that it was a serious obligation—yes, of course, he would be bound to go to confession before receiving the Eucharist. It bears mentioning that sharing in the Eucharist was considered a one-way street. Jesus asked the Apostles to keep his memory alive.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbus Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.)

Question Corner

Pray and trust in God’s mercy regarding the souls of the faithful departed

Q: My daughter, who was 50 years old, became seriously ill. She spent six weeks in an intensive care unit, then entered hospice to die. When her death was imminent, a nurse finally found a priest to administer last rites. (It was a Jewish hospice, and they never mentioned calling a priest.)

By that time, my daughter was in a coma. She hadn’t been to church or to confession in 30 years. When she was admitted to hospice, the hospital had signed her permission for any necessary medical procedures.

A: I would not presume to know for certain the ultimate fate of your daughter, but I am inclined to trust in the mercy of a loving God. In the 25th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus indicates the final standard on which each of us will be judged—and the key question is: “Did you help people when they needed it?” (“I was hungry and you gave me food … ill and you cared for me.” Mt 25:35-36). From what you said, it would seem that your daughter scores high on this scale of compassion.

If, in fact, she did have an abortion, it could be that she regretted it later and repented. She may have then been absolved of it in the sacrament of penance without your knowing about it. Your reference to “last rites” reminds me to mention that this sacrament is actually called the “anointing of the sick”—highlighting the fact that it is not reserved for the moment of death, but should be received when anyone is seriously ill. That way, the person is more likely to be able to confess his or her sins, receive absolution and be assured of the mercy of the Lord.
Ethiopian cardinal praises his nation's peace deal with Eritrea

Cardinal Souraphiel said the “steps taken so far by both governments prove that the U.N.-brokered border agreement in 2000, during the 1998-2000 over a fierce border conflict. The eight-month war are believed to have been killed between June 23 and January 20, 1999.”

ETHIOPIA, as Eritrean government officials head of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, where she served in Catholic education for 42 years, from 1947-2005. During her 71 years as a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence, she served in Catholic schools in Indiana, Illinois, Maryland, North Carolina and Texas. In the archdiocese, she served in Catholic education at St. Paul School in Sellersburg from 1950-51, and in Indianapolis at St. Anthony School from 1951-54 and St. Philip Ner Church from 1957-58. Sister Maureen also served at the motherhouse as a driver from 1972-73, 1982-85 and 1997-2018. She also served in the business office at the motherhouse from 1975-76. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 13 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47476.

Pope Francis uses innings to bless the casket of French Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran during his funeral Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on July 20, 2018. Cardinal Tauran, who announced the election of Pope Francis, had a long career as a Vatican diplomat and later worked on interreligious dialogue. He died on July 5 at the age of 75 in Hartford, Conn. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Berhaneyesus Cardinal Souraphiel told Catholic Church will continue to pray both for the Catholic Church that the prayers of Ethiopia and Eritrea.”

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Beidelman was born on Aug. 12, 1939, in Indianapolis. She grew up as a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. She was a student at Our Lady of Lourdes School and a member of the first graduating class of Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis in 1957. In 1959, she married her husband, Robert, who died in 2006. She is survived by her sons, Ken Beidelman, Michael Beidelman, Father Patrick Beidelman and Steven Beidelman, all of Indianapolis, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

In addition to living as a faithful wife and helping to raise her children, Beidelman enjoyed welcoming her large extended family as well as strangers who needed encouragement into her home on Indianapolis’ east side. She also worked as a teacher’s aide at Sunny Heights Elementary School and at Warren Early Childhood Center, both in Indianapolis.

At the time of her death, she was a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, where she had been a parishioner for more than 50 years.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Holy Spirit Parish, 7243 E. 106th St., Indianapolis 46219.

TheCriterion.org

Friday, July 20, 2018

Cardinal Souraphiel told Catholic Church will continue to pray both for the Catholic Church that the prayers of Ethiopia and Eritrea.”

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

Pope Francis uses innings to bless the casket of French Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran during his funeral Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on July 20, 2018. Cardinal Tauran, who announced the election of Pope Francis, had a long career as a Vatican diplomat and later worked on interreligious dialogue. He died on July 5 at the age of 75 in Hartford, Conn. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Berhaneyesus Cardinal Souraphiel told Catholic Church will continue to pray both for the Catholic Church that the prayers of Ethiopia and Eritrea.”

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on July 9 at Holy Spirit Church in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Patricia Ann Casey Beidelman, 78, mother of Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization and rector of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, died on July 5 at Franciscan Hospice House in Indianapolis.
work fine, but his lower legs and feet don’t move at all. He has feeling in his lower legs and can feel his feet if we grab them and squeeze. "The bones of his spine need to heal. Until that happens, he’s in a great deal of pain, and he can’t sit upright," Maig. Mr. Svarczkopf, pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood, has provided the family with not only spiritual support, but empathy as well.

"I told [Amy], when I was Alex’s age I broke my back in exactly the same place," he says. "It’s life changing. I don’t do all those things I did before the accident. It changed me. An injury like that does affect you the rest of your life." The miracles just keep unfolding" Yet the Kalscheurs—Amy, husband Michael and their seven additional children ranging in age from 9–22—see God’s presence in the midst of the chaos. "The amazing thing is, he didn’t have a scratch on his body except on an arm, which happened after the fall," Kalscheur says. The doctors said he landed as if cradled.

Want to help Alex’s family get home soon? Here’s how

• www.gofundme.com/982pa-bring-alex-home

Alex with his two rosaries he touched to a relic at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris on July 6. They were still in his pocket later the same day when he fell 30 feet, fracturing one vertebrae and destroying another.

For Sale

CALVARY CATHOLIC CEMETARY 2 Bunel Plot cost originally $2000.00 each. Will sell both for $2800.00 call (317) 647-0950 or (317) 476-1903

VACATION RENTAL

BEACHFRONT CONDO 1808 23rd Ave. Beach front, 1 BR/2BA, pool & 20’ balcony overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. Meet Indianapolis owner. See photos, call Rob in at 317-506-8516

For more information about rates for classified advertising, call (317) 236-1454.

FRANCE

continued from page 1

They have full capability, yet his doctors are saying he will walk. They don’t know if he’ll have full capability, and it will be a struggle, but they are optimistic.

One particular parish ministry is coordinating several efforts to help the Kalscheurs. Agape Performing Arts Company produces amateur youth plays and musicals with a focus on developing cooperation and community among all involved.

Tracey Rollison, Agape’s community relations director, says the Kalscheur family “has been very involved with us,” from several siblings acting and stage managing, to Amy serving as treasurer. "Alex is kind of one of my favorites," she continues. "He is really one of the best people I know. The whole family are just perennially happy people. It’s deeply rooted in their strong Catholic faith. It’s the peace of God they all have. "We hope we get Alex back home soon." To help make that happen, the ministry is accepting donations and cards for Alex at all performances of their current production, Oliver the Musical. They worked with a Greenwood location of Firehouse Subs to donate 20 percent of its sales on July 26. And one Agape couple is coordinating a dinner and dance at the parish on July 28. (See related story on this page for more information on fundraising efforts for Alex’s transportation and medical costs.)

When asked about such support, Kalscheur pauses to stifle her tears. "It’s overwhelming to me, the generosity of others," she says, her voice choked with emotion.

“He’s the type of kid who, if for some reason we go to Mass at noon, he’ll go back a second time to emceee at 6 p.m. [Mass]. If they need servers, he’ll [serve] two Masses. He has a love for the Mass that I think one rarely sees in someone his age. He’s a very spiritual person. His love for Christ is so great." "We want him to receive rehabilitation in the States," she says. "He needs to take a medical flight, which is $75,000 to $100,000. And then we need to have medical attendants on the way home because lots of things could happen." Here, too, people have stepped up to help. A GoFundMe campaign was started online, and Our Lady of the Greenwood will sell baked goods after each Mass on July 21 and 22.

One particular parish ministry is coordinating several efforts to help the Kalscheurs. Agape Performing Arts Company produces amateur youth plays and musicals with a focus on developing cooperation and community among all involved.

Tracey Rollison, Agape’s community relations director, says the Kalscheur family “has been very involved with us,” from several siblings acting and stage managing, to Amy serving as treasurer. "Alex is kind of one of my favorites," she continues. "He is really one of the best people I know. The whole family are just perennially happy people. It’s deeply rooted in their strong Catholic faith. It’s

Faith has been so crucial" Efforts from family and friends to raise funds are not all that give hope to the Kalscheurs. Their faith sustains them day in and day out.

"Jesus said himself he healed [the blind man] so that the glory of God might be shown," says Kalscheur, referring to John 9:3. "That verse stuck with me. It’s so powerful.

And after my husband finished praying a rosary by Alex’s bedside, he felt a large hand on his shoulder, and he felt peace. That one moment is carrying Michael.”

Faith is helping Alex’s siblings as well. "Faith has been so crucial," says his 21-year-old sister Olivia Kitchell, a member of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis. After receiving the news of her brother’s accident, she and her husband immediately prayed the rosary. “The first and only thing we could do was pray,” she says. “It’s necessary just to trust, because there is absolutely nothing we can do.”

And while she notes that her own prayers are “meaningful,” Kitchell says the “amazing outpouring of grace and hope from the community just blows me away.” We have friends who have offered Masses, priest friends who have [celebrated] Masses. That firestorm of prayer, I think, is what’s making this so much easier on the family.” Her mother agrees. It’s important in this hardship an opportunity to share God’s goodness. “Yes, there’s the money side of this [story],” Amy says. “But to share the story of faith is what’s most important.”

“We’re not the only ones [in the world] who are suffering, and we have to be careful not to think we’re alone in our suffering. We all suffer together, and the glory is that when we suffer with Christ, we can rise with him."
**U.S. advocates say Christians in Myanmar’s Kachin state need help**

**WASHINGTON (CNS)—** TheTamadaw, the military of Myanmar, has been attacking the ethnic minority Kachin people in what some observers are calling a genocide. Although much attention has been given to the ethnic Rohingya, “If you ask the Kachin if they believe a genocide is taking place, everyone will tell you yes,” said the Rev. Bob Roberts, senior pastor at Northwood Church in Dallas, who recently visited Myanmar.

In Kachin state, which is more than 90 percent Baptist and about 5 percent Catholic, the Tamadaw has burned 406 villages and 311 churches and displaced more than 130,000 people in the past seven years. “These are gut-wrenching acts,” said Nicole Ambrose, spokeswoman for the International Coalition to Stop Genocide in Burma.

The motivation for the attacks is an ongoing conflict that started almost as soon as Burma, now Myanmar, gained its independence from Britain in 1948. Since the military government of Myanmar views the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), which Rev. Roberts described as “for the most part, a terrorist organization,” as a threat, it has launched attacks.

Despite this, the KIA, along with other ethnic armed groups, was invited to a government-sponsored peace conference on July 11-16.

Ambrose described a trip to a camp for internally displaced Kachin, where she met women and children who were victims of violence. Fifty-two percent of women who had survived attacks on villages had been raped, she said.

“It’s first an ethnic problem and second a religious problem,” said Rev. Roberts, although he said that religion did play a role in the attacks.

Since the vast majority of the Kachin are Christians, the Tamadaw goes out of its way to attack churches, said Sat San Nway, the president of the Kachin National Organization USA.

“Churches are the core of the community. When the military personnel come and destroy churches, they destroy the people’s hope and safety and shatter their mentality. That’s what they’re aiming for,” he said.

The Christians are easy targets because they tend to flee to churches, said Rev. Roberts.

One specific deacon who used leading by example to change his life was my grandfather, Deacon Ronald Stier. Deacon Ron Stier not only led us to openly holy life in the Church, but also a personal one within our family. My grandpa changed me to become a better person through his obvious love and example of service.

Deacon Ron Stier was a disciple of Christ. He showed this quality through his unconditional love for everyone. My grandpa had a large family, and he loved us all more than anything. When he first became a deacon, he came home and gave us all a blessing.

As a young child, this had a huge impression on me. I thought my grandfather was the most amazing person alive. I bragged about him to all of my friends. He blessed our Bibles, rosaries, and other items. He persuaded me to pray more than anyone else. My grandpa made creating a relationship with God fun and easy to understand. He shaped my prayer routine, and made me who I am today.

My grandpa loved his family so much, and showed it all the time. By loving us, he showed us the love of Jesus. With every sacrifice he made for his family, he emulated Christ’s sacrifice for us. That is what made him such a great disciple. Deacon Ron’s actions have shown me how to love others and treat them with respect.

He also affected my life by his acts of service. This was a major way he led by example. My grandma used to deliver Communion to various places, including nursing homes and even the jail. Here, he led by example.

Since he passed away, my other grandparents have become an extraordinary minister of holy Communion who brings the Eucharist to homebound members of the parish. I am also now considering becoming an extraordinary minister of holy Communion.

This goes to show that my grandfather’s selfless actions have an effect on various people. Even when he was ill, my grandpa did his best to serve the Church. This was especially inspiring to me. Though my grandpa was struggling himself, he still constantly thought of others.

Deacon Ron Stier was a disciple of Christ through his love and service. He changed my life and many others for the better.

Leadership is an excellent trait to have, and my grandpa was naturally an incredible leader. His examples showed me the correct way to live. Leading by example is the only way to change lives, and that is exactly what my grandfather did.

(Sarah and her parents, Vince and Elizabeth Gray, are members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond. She completed the 12th grade at Seton Catholic High School in Richmond last spring, and is the 12th-grade division winner in the Indianapolis Serra Club’s 2018 John D. Kelley Vocations Essay Contest.)

Help us carry on God’s work.